

Module Three

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE AND DELEGATED TASKS

A learning module developed by the Bureau of Facility Standards to train Residential Care or Assisted Living facility staff.

Why you should take this training.

Providing assistance to residents in a residential care or assisted living facility is a very big responsibility. Learning about medication assistance and about delegation from the licensed nurse will help you provide quality services to your residents.

What you will learn in this module:

- ✓ Terms related to assistance with medications and delegation.
- ✓ What rules cover delegation and assistance with medications.
- ✓ What needs to happen before you can assist with medications.
- ✓ Things you need to know when you assist with medications.
- ✓ What to do if you make a medication error.
- ✓ What documentation you need to do for medications.
- ✓ Other things that can be delegated.
- ✓ Things that cannot be delegated.



What you need to do to take this training.

Ask your Administrator how she or he wants you to do the training. You can do the training on the computer or you can print the training and work with the printed pages. Generally, you can just work through the modules in the order they are listed.

Who to ask if you have questions about this training.

If you have questions about the way things are done in your facility, ask your Administrator or licensed nurse. If you or your Administrator have questions or comments about the content of the training, ask your Administrator to contact the Residential Community Care Program Supervisor at the Bureau of Facility Standards.

Words to know:

Assistance with Medications – helping residents take their medications when they are able to participate but they cannot independently take them.

Delegation – assignment of a task by one person to another person.

MAR – Medication Assistance Record. Facilities track medication assistance by having the caregiver initial a form when the medication is taken.

Medication Error – when residents take medications that are not the right medication, for the right resident, at the right time, in the right dose, and by the right route. Or, when residents do not receive medications they are supposed to take (unless they have refused).

Order – a document (prescription) signed by a physician or other authorized provider (nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, or physician assistant) that specifies a medication or treatment for a resident.

PRN – medications that are given as needed. For example assisting residents to take a pain medication when they have a headache.

Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)-personnel, without a nurses license, that are employed to perform nursing care services under the direction and supervision of licensed nurses. These personnel also include licensed or credentialed health care workers whose job responsibilities extend to health care services beyond their usual and customary roles and which activities are provided under the direction and supervision licensed nurses.

A delegated task is a task that one person assigns to another person. This module is about medication assistance and other tasks that are delegated to you by a licensed nurse.

Most of the care provided in residential care or assisted living is provided by unlicensed caregivers. Licensed nurses generally don't provide the hands-on care, so certain tasks such as medication assistance are 'delegated' to unlicensed caregivers. CNA's (certified nursing assistants) are unlicensed caregivers.

Delegation of medication assistance by licensed nurses in residential care or assisted living facilities is covered by two sets of state rules.

- ✚ Rules of the Idaho State Board of Nursing
- ✚ Rules for Residential Care or Assisted Living Facilities in Idaho

The rules for Residential Care of Assisted Living Facilities refer to the rules of the Idaho State Board of Nursing. The facility licensed nurse must follow the appropriate rules of the Idaho State Board of Nursing when delegating tasks to unlicensed caregivers.

What this means to you

- The rules for delegation are there to protect residents. If the rules are followed, it will help you provide safe, quality care for your residents.
- Be Sure you do not accept a task that is delegated to you unless you are certain you know how to do it correctly.
- The licensed nurse has the responsibility for proper delegation, but you must still take responsibility for your own actions.

Before you can Assist with Medications you need to:

- ✚ Complete an approved training class
- ✚ Have the task delegated to you by a licensed nurse

Most residents in residential care or assisted living require assistance with medications. Before you can assist with medications, you must complete a medication class that is approved by the Idaho State Board of Nursing. The task must also be delegated to you by the facility's licensed nurse.

What this means to you

- You must complete a Medication Assistance class before assisting with medications. These classes are available through the Idaho Professional Technical Education system and are generally offered by the Professional Technical (Vocational) College in each region of the state (North Idaho College, Lewis Clark State College, Boise State University, College of Southern Idaho, Idaho State University and Eastern Idaho Technical College). When you complete the course, you will be given a certificate. Give a copy of the certificate to your facility.

- Work with your facility licensed nurse to get the task of assisting with medications delegated to you.
- You **cannot** delegate medication assistance to another unlicensed caregiver. The licensed nurse has to delegate to the other unlicensed caregivers.

Additional conditions for assisting with medications by an unlicensed caregiver include:

- A licensed professional nurse (RN) has developed a plan of care for the resident. This may be done when the RN participates in the development of the resident's Negotiated Service Agreement.
- The unlicensed caregiver has been instructed about assisting with medications by the licensed nurse.
- Physician (or other authorized provider) orders must be followed when assisting with medications.

Requirements for medication assistance in Residential Care or Assisted Living:

- ✚ All residents are assisted with medications unless a licensed professional nurse (RN) has determined they are able to take their medications by themselves.
- ✚ Generally, medications must be given from properly labeled medi-sets or blister packs.
- ✚ Temporary medications can be given from the multi-dose container.

If residents wish to self medicate, the facility's licensed professional nurse (RN) needs to determine if the resident is capable of taking medications without assistance. The facility is required to use a medication system that is approved by the Department of Health and Welfare. This will generally be medisets or blister packs but under certain conditions, the facility can use bulk medication containers. Medication orders must be filled by a pharmacist. The blister packs or medisets must be labeled in accordance with pharmacy standards. A licensed nurse can also fill medisets or blister packs and must label them with the medication name, dose, amount, time to be taken and any special instructions.

What this means to you

- Be sure you know which residents the licensed professional (RN) nurse has determined to be able to self medicate and which residents need to be assisted with their medications.
- Residents who don't self medicate should not have medications in their room. If you see medications in the room of a resident who does not self medicate, tell your administrator and licensed nurse. This includes all types of medications, including creams and inhalers. If you see residents who have an order to take their own medications but are having difficulty taking them correctly, tell your administrator and facility licensed nurse.

- Some residents have orders allowing them to self medicate certain medications but not others.
 - Always use the blister packs or mediset system when assisting with routine medications unless your facility has a variance to use bulk medication containers.
 - Check to be sure the mediset, blister pack or bulk container has been correctly labeled.
- You need to know what medications you are assisting residents to take.**

Steps to follow when you assist with medications:

- ✚ Use correct infection prevention procedures.
- ✚ Follow the 6 rights you learned in the Medication Assistance course.
- ✚ Observe the resident taking the medication.

This module is not intended to replace the information included in the Assistance with Medications course. You are required to take that course before you can assist with medications. Refer to the information you received in the course or ask the facility licensed nurse if you have questions about the actual process of assisting with medications.

Using proper infection prevention techniques, following the 6 rights of medication assistance, and observing the resident take the medications are the fundamentals of medication assistance.

What this means to you

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you assist residents with medications and any time your hands become contaminated.
- Pop or pour medications directly from the approved container into a clean medicine cup or into the resident's hand.
- **Be sure you follow the 6 rights of medication assistance.** They are the right medication, in the right dose, at the right time, to the right resident, by the right route, and the right documentation.
- Remember, not assisting a resident with an ordered medication violates all of these rights.
- Residential care or assisted living rules require you to observe residents take the medications when you assist. This applies to all forms of medication. For example, if you assist residents with breathing treatments, you must watch the entire treatment, even though it takes a few minutes.

What to do if you make a medication error:

- ✚ Immediately inform the resident, your administrator, and licensed professional nurse (RN).
- ✚ While the necessary people are being contacted, watch the resident for signs of a reaction.
- ✚ Provide the information needed to complete an incident report.

Medication errors can have serious results, including death. If the resident shows signs of a reaction, call 911. Your Administrator, or person designated by your Administrator, and the facility licensed professional nurse (RN)) need to be informed. The effects of the error need to be evaluated by a medical professional. Medication errors need to be treated as an incident and an incident report needs to be completed.

What this means to you

- Be careful when you assist with medications. The best way to deal with a medication error is to avoid it.
- Immediately notify your Administrator (or designated person) and licensed professional nurse (RN) if you make or discover a medication error.
- Be sure to watch the resident for signs of a reaction while medical professionals are being contacted.
- Assist with completion of an incident investigation and report so the error can be avoided in the future.
- Residents have the right to refuse medications. This is not a medication error.

Things that need to be documented when you assist with medications:

- ✚ Follow your facility's policy on how you are to document assistance with routine medications.
- ✚ Document all ordered medications refused by residents or not given with the reason not given.
- ✚ Document all as-needed (PRN) medications with the reason given.

The rules require certain things about medication assistance to be documented (written down). Your facility's policies may require additional documentation about medication assistance.

What this means to you

- Be sure you document, according to facility policy, when you assist residents with routine medications.
- You must document any medication refused by the resident, not given to the resident, or not taken by the resident and the reason why the resident didn't get the medication. Tell your administrator and licensed nurse if the resident refuses medications.
- You must document all PRN medications you assist the resident to take and the reason the resident took the medication. It is also helpful to document the results (that is, did the medication help?).

Additional documentation related to medications:

- ✚ The facility must maintain an inventory of all narcotic (controlled) medications.

- ✚ Unused medications need to be destroyed and the facility needs to have a destruction log.

The facility must have a record of narcotic (controlled) medications so that use of the medications can be tracked. Unused or discontinued medications of any kind should not be kept in the facility for more than 30 days and must be destroyed or returned. The facility must have a disposal log that includes:

- ✚ A description of the drug, including the amount
- ✚ The name of the resident who used the medication
- ✚ The reason for disposal of the medication
- ✚ The method of disposal of the medication
- ✚ The date of disposal or return
- ✚ Signatures of the responsible facility staff person and a witness

In addition to medication assistance, there are other tasks that can be delegated to you by a licensed nurse.

Tasks such as non-sterile dressing changes and blood glucose monitoring can be delegated by the licensed nurse. The requirements for delegation are about the same as for medication assistance. There is generally no course for these tasks that is approved by the Idaho State Board of Nursing but the licensed nurse who delegates must be sure you are able to do the task safely and correctly before he/she can delegate it to you.

What this means to you

- Don't do any nursing task unless it has been delegated to you by the licensed nurse.
- Be sure you understand how to do the task. If you don't understand how to do it safely and correctly, work with the licensed nurse to learn the task.
- Don't delegate the task to another staff person. The licensed nurse has to delegate it to each staff person who does it.

There are certain things the licensed nurse cannot delegate to unlicensed staff.

The following tasks **CAN NOT** be delegated to unlicensed caregivers:

- ✚ Sterile procedures
- ✚ Prepare (draw up) or give injections
- ✚ Start, stop or adjust any intravenous therapy
- ✚ Adjust oxygen without clear direction from a licensed nurse
- ✚ Nasogastric tube feeding or medication administration through an NG tube
- ✚ Mix or compound medications
- ✚ Prepare, apply or adjust intermittent positive-pressure breathing machines
- ✚ Assist with either preparation or administration of non-routine medications (general PRN medications ordered by the physician are usually considered routine)
- ✚ Anything that has not been delegated in writing

You cannot re-delegate to a coworker

What this means to you

You can't do any of the tasks listed above.

Learning exercises:

1. Ask the facility licensed nurse about the process he or she uses to delegate tasks to unlicensed caregivers.
2. Review the course materials from your Assistance With Medications class, if you have already taken one.
3. Look up and learn about 10 common prescription medications taken by residents in your facility using a drug handbook or the internet.

Check your knowledge:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. If an ordered medication is not given to the resident, you need to document it was not given. | True False |
| 2. Your House Manager is not a nurse, but it's ok for him/her to delegate medication assistance to you. | True False |
| 3. You can give resident's their flu shot as long as the Administrator tells you to. | True False |
| 4. You are still responsible to do a task correctly after the licensed nurse has delegated it to you. | True False |
| 5. If a resident usually takes his/her medications ok, you don't need to watch him/her take them anymore. | True False |
| 6. The Medication Assistance course you take must be approved by the Idaho State Board of Nursing. | True False |

7. You can do a sterile dressing change as long as a licensed nurse has taught you how to do it.

True False

8. If you make a medication error, what will you do?

9. List 3 things that need to be documented about medications.

Answers:

1. True

2. False

3. False

4. True

5. False

6. True

7. False

8. Tell the resident, Administrator (or designee), and licensed professional nurse (RN), watch the resident for a reaction, help complete an incident report

9. PRN medications, medications refused by residents, narcotic (controlled substance) inventory, destruction log, and MAR.